



---

## Strategic Planning Session

Stakeholder Consultation Phase  
January 2009

Prepared For:  
The PEI Golf Association

Prepared By:  
Atlantic Evaluation Group ([www.aegroup.ca](http://www.aegroup.ca))  
Streamline Consulting ([www.streamlineconsulting.ca](http://www.streamlineconsulting.ca))

## **Statement of Purpose**

The following document contains information intended for the purpose of defining the strategic direction for the Prince Edward Island (PEI) Golf Association. Information presented in this report is a reflection of the input obtained through a strategic planning session held on January 9, 2009 at the Belvedere Golf Course with golf industry stakeholders. The Atlantic Evaluation Group and Streamline Consulting waive any responsibility for information which may be misrepresented or perceived as factual. This report should be treated as a draft document *only*. The PEI Golf Association, in defining its overall strategic direction and priorities, will be using the content contained herein to further develop a detailed action plan.

# PEI Golf Association

## Strategic Planning Session

---

### **Background**

The PEI Golf Association is a non-profit organization established to provide leadership, policy, and planning support to amateur golf on PEI. The work of the Association is governed by a volunteer eight member Executive Group, and is supported by an Executive Director.

### **Mission Statement**

The PEI Golf Association is the governing body of amateur golf in Prince Edward Island. It determines Provincial policies and, in conjunction with the Royal Canadian Golf Association, sets standards relating to the game on behalf of its members. In addition to conducting PEI's eight Provincial amateur championships, the PEIGA also funds turfgrass research, conducts junior development programs, offers scholarships to deserving juniors, course/slope rates member courses, provides handicap services and rules clinics, facilitates Future Links, and provides many other services to amateur golfers and member clubs.

The objectives of the PEI Golf Association to date have been to:

- promote, develop and administer throughout Prince Edward Island, competitive and recreational amateur golf with the jurisdiction of the Association;
- arrange, establish and supervise such tournaments as may be sanctioned by the PEIGA;
- protect the interests of the game of golf and to uphold the Rules of Golf as approved for use in Canada;
- maintain affiliation with the RCGA; and
- ensure communication to all the Members.

The Association's interest in conducting a review of its strategic direction are based on contributing factors such as; the recent merging of the men's golf league and women's golf league (both at the provincial and national levels); an increasingly competitive environment for player recruitment combined with growing public interest in the sport; and the assurance that the Association is meeting the needs of stakeholders while continuously growing the sport of amateur golf on Prince Edward Island.

## **Overview**

The PEI Golf Association (PEIGA) hosted its first ever strategic planning session at the Belvedere Golf Club on January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Invitations were extended to over forty groups with representation of PEIGA members, golf course shareholders/owners, golf course managers, current/past golf professionals, Sport PEI, the Department of Recreation and Culture, the Golf Association Executive Board, PEIGA volunteers, and individuals from the retail golf industry. Approximately thirty individuals participated in the strategic planning session.

## **Session Goals**

The primary goals of the planning sessions were to; provide the PEIGA with the opportunity to review and confirm its future direction and focus; to identify the critical issues and opportunities facing the organization over the next three to five years; and to develop a strategic plan for amateur golf on Prince Edward Island.

The planning session was co-facilitated by Steve McQuaid of the Atlantic Evaluation Group Inc. (AEG) and Detry Carragher from Streamline Consulting Inc, with support from Shauna Fuller from AEG.

## **Methodology**

A structured strategic planning methodology was used to engage participants in carrying out the following tasks:

- Review/confirm PEI Golf Association’s vision and mission statements.
- Identify future “images of success” for the PEI Golf Association.
- Complete a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) scan of the PEIGA (internal), and the amateur golf environment within the province (external).
- Identify a list of critical issues to be addressed.
- Develop short term and long term goals and action items to address the issues.

The subsequent report is a summary of the outcomes of the strategic planning session.

## PEIGA's Vision and Mission Statement

The PEI Golf Association's mission statement was reviewed to verify if it still accurately reflected the purpose of the organization. The group unanimously concluded that the mission statement was in need of some revision. The Association did not previously have a vision statement.

Based on collective participant feedback, a proposed mission and vision statement for the PEI Golf Association *may* read as follows:

**Mission:** We are the governing body of golf on Prince Edward Island. Our mission is to develop, promote, and administer all aspects and levels of amateur golf in Prince Edward Island.

**Vision:** The PEI Golf Association (PEIGA) will be recognized as the leader in policy development, program development, and planning support for amateur golf on Prince Edward Island.

## Role of the Association

While defining the mission and vision statements, it was evident that the role of the Association has been, to some extent, ambiguous to date. Comments and perceptions include:

- Lack of clarity regarding the role and responsibility of the Association in relation to its members;
- Who is considered a member of the Association and what are the benefits of a membership? Inconsistency in the collection of PEIGA membership fees was also identified.
- What is the role of course owners/operators within the Association?
- What are the expectations with public and private golf courses and how are those relationships defined?
- Should it be the role of the Association to play a broader leadership role in addressing all issues in amateur golf?

## Envisioning the Future

Participants were invited to look ahead and 'envision success' for the Association and amateur golf on PEI. Participants were asked to reflect on the following scenario, and respond to two questions.

“It is January 2014 – five years into the future - and the PEI Golf Association has been highly successful in advancing amateur golf on PEI. What would this success look like to you? What did you or your organization contribute to this success?”

Envisioning 2014 and as a result of the PEIGA's leadership, amateur golf on PEI will:

- Be widely promoted as a sport that is fun to play, provides for opportunities for socializing with friends, and contributes to one's physical health and well-being; golf is being promoted as a healthy lifestyle choice.
- Have increased levels of participation of both genders and at all levels, including; children/youth, adults, public players, and seniors; there are a range of membership structures and options that are attracting a wider range of people into the sport.
- Be as accessible (to young people especially) as any other sport (i.e. soccer, hockey, baseball, etc).
- Have a strongly developed and widely promoted (all clubs/courses participating) youth development program; this program would include all critical stages of development (i.e. introductory, school-based, recreational and competitive programs, an active senior golfer/youth golfer mentor program, etc).
- Have a strong cadre of certified coaches and officials trained and supported to develop and oversee the sport.
- Have developed more creative alternatives to playing the game; e.g. a nine hole round will be viewed as an acceptable way to play, plus the industry has developed a whole range of innovate ways to play golf (e.g. same day play, corporate groups, bring-a-guest, one day fun tournaments, green fee players have a chance to participate in tournaments, etc)
- Be viewed by the public as a positive and contributing sector to the economy (the sector is a key economic development engine for tourism) and community/social well-being of the province (golf owners/operators contribute significantly to Island charities and NGOs).
- Be viewed as an 'environmentally friendly' sector; there are greater efforts to adopt and implement 'green' technologies and practices in operating and managing golf courses (e.g. turf management, use of pesticides, fertilizers, etc) .

In 2014 the PEI Golf Association will:

- Be recognized as THE coordinating body for amateur golf on PEI.
- Have a visible and high profile multi-media marketing campaign that promotes the economic, social, and health benefits of golf.
- Have a fully developed communications and public relations strategy (internally, with stakeholders, and within the broader public); its programs and services are well publicized and promoted to everyone.
- Have increased membership numbers, and increased operating revenue (increased membership and new revenue sources).

## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

Session participants were divided up into three groups and were asked to complete the SWOT scan; one group included the PEIGA Executive members; a second group included the golf course owners/operators, and golf professionals; and the third group included other individuals such as representative from government departments, etc. The following notes provide a summary of the SWOT scan results.

<b>Strengths</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The long and rich history of the PEIGA (40 years); there has been (and continues to be) a diverse range of individuals and stakeholders who have been committed to the development of golf on PEI.</li><li>• The PEIGA's affiliation and working relationship with the Royal Canadian Golf Association.</li><li>• The PEIGA's working relationship with course owners and operators.</li><li>• The availability and quality of volunteers who are prepared to work with the Association.</li><li>• PEI's small size geographically; this provides for ease of communication, planning and collaboration among industry and sector stakeholders and leaders.</li><li>• PEI has the distinction of being Canada's # 1 golf destination; there are many top quality courses, with very competitive green fees and/or membership fees (compared with other golf jurisdictions).</li><li>• The Golf Academy offer 'top of the line' golf instruction and support; there are many professional level golfers available.</li><li>• Golf is a sport that is accessible, and can be a life long sport that anyone can learn to play, at varying levels of opportunity for both competitive and recreational play.</li><li>• The growing focus on youth development; provincial participation in all national amateur competitions (amateur, seniors, youth, women); strong senior tour, etc.</li><li>• PEIGA's experience in running competitive tournaments, rules clinics, and conducting course ratings.</li><li>• Availability of government and corporate support with many options to assist golf development at all levels.</li></ul>

<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• PEIGA - lack of clarity regarding purpose, role, direction; lack of communication (internal re: members, and general public) - communication weak all across the sport.</li><li>• PEIGA - limited financial resources to manage/implement programs, provide services to members; expectations that work tasks can be undertaken exclusively by volunteers, other sports have more resources for paid staff.</li><li>• PEIGA - may be operating with an outdated constitution and board structure; may need to 'gear up' structure and policies, practices to better meet emerging challenges; may need to recruit volunteers with specific skills/experiences</li><li>• PEIGA - focusing too much on a narrow demographic or part of the population</li><li>• PEIGA - not well known to public - limited use of/relationship with media to get the message out regarding events and activities - benefits of being a PEIGA members is not clear.</li><li>• Lack of a comprehensive golf development strategy and program (children/youth, women, seniors, etc); there are too few certified coaches.</li><li>• Access issues - there are some restrictions as to who is allowed on certain courses (e.g. no child under 12 years of age).</li><li>• Important golf stakeholders/bodies (PEIGA, Golf PEI, government, course owners/operators) may not be working as collaboratively as needed.</li></ul>

- Tournament fees - the costs of tournament play is a possible deterrent to golfer participation; especially for the recreational golfer.
- Limited promotion re: golf packages for non government golf courses.

### Opportunities

- Demographics of baby-boomers increasing (big golfing market as the boomers retire).
- Female involvement (e.g., there's a wait-list for ladies nights where they happen).
- Potential to introduce/incorporate golf into school Phys Ed. programs; children/youth are open for development.
- Potential to build on or strengthen corporate sponsors and partnerships.
- Potential to attract the 'public player' on a more predictable basis.
- Build on the concept of 'nine hole golf'; target families.
- Access funding.
- Build on the green fee player; are there other 'perks' that can be offered to maintain interest and involvement in the sport.
- Identify, develop and promote the benefits of being a PEIGA member.
- Better utilization of under-used facilities (e.g. Strathgartney (nine hole course).
- Pursue creative fund-raising options (e.g. have team players commit to fund-raise a certain amount of \$ in return for PEIGA coverage of expenses benefits).
- Encourage more golf professionals to obtain coaches certification (work with Golf Academy and Holland College).
- Better utilization of media to promote PEIGA message.
- Capitalize on the diversity of the golf milieu (different players, different courses, different golf experiences).

### Threats

- Current economic environment; costs of course operations continues to grow, many operators facing revenue challenges; revenue levels for golf operators are not likely to grow in next few years; need to operate more efficiently.
- Emerging Atlantic markets; Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and NFLD have all invested heavily in golf over the past five years - heave competition for tourist golfer.
- Public perceptions that golf is an expensive, complicated sport that takes a long time to play (only for high income, skilled players, etc).
- Appeal to potential golf members; many people who would otherwise play view the sport as too costly, difficult to learn, and takes to long to play 18 holes.
- Declining numbers re the 'traditional' golfer; in some instances club memberships are declining, and there are fewer numbers registering for competitive events; need to make golf more accessible, more fun, etc.
- Emerging environmental concerns re extensive use of pesticides and fertilizers, etc; there will be growing pressures for course to adopt 'green practices' regarding course maintenance.
- Apparent conflict of interest between golf courses as businesses (competition) and promoting the sport as a social/community activity (cooperation).
- Distorted perceptions- watching professional golf on TV raises public expectations about the appearance of the grounds, the skill required to play the game, etc.

## Critical Issues/Priorities and Action Steps

The consultants used information gathered through the “envisioning” exercise and the SWOT scan to summarize critical issues. Working in small groups, participants identified short term and long term goals for each of the critical issues/priorities.

The following section provides a summary of the consultant team's review and analysis of the ideas and input from the 'brainstorming' session.

Critical Issue/Priority
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND BUSINESS PRACTICES

### Description:

Session participants noted that the PEIGA lacks clarity regarding its purpose, role(s) and direction; it may be operating with an outdated constitution and board structure; there is a need to 'gear up' its structure, policies, and business practices to better meet emerging challenges within amateur golf on PEI. In addition, some people assume that the Association has a broader leadership role regarding amateur golf, but see limited evidence of the Association doing this (i.e. taking a leadership role on issues). Several participants indicated that they believe that the PEIGA could be operating more as an overall coordinating body for amateur golf on PEI.

### Short Terms Goals:

- A. To confirm the vision and mission of the PEIGA
- B. To review PEIGA Board structure and constitution
- C. To clarify Board roles and functions
- D. To identify whether additional skills sets and expertise are needed at the Board level
- E. To identify and address Board liability and risk-management issues
- F. To expand the scope and range of representation around the Board table (e.g. more women, geographic representation)

### Action Steps:

- Review/discuss/amend the proposed vision and mission statement contained in this report
- Review current Board structure, roles and functions of individual officers, working relationships between Board officers, Executive Director, etc
- Identify if Board structure, roles, functions are properly defined as per the intent of the vision and mission statements
- Identify whether additional skill sets are required at the Board level
- Identify the appropriate business practices to allow the Board to carry out its vision and mission effectively
- Identify and establish effective internal (between/among PEIGA Board members) and external (with members, course owners/operators) communication protocols and practices.

**Long Term Goal:**

- A. To establish the PEIGA as THE coordinating body for amateur golf on PEI.

**Action Step:**

- Establish an annual event (ie. symposium) to bring together all the significant stakeholders within amateur golf on PEI; the Association would take the lead, but would collaborate with other partners; the event might be organized around a key theme that would attract wide spread interest within the golf sector. This workshop could also be used as an opportunity for all key groups and stakeholders within the industry to identify/discuss the emerging trends, challenges and opportunities facing amateur golf.

<b>Critical Issue/Priority</b>
IDENTIFYING THE VALUE-ADDED SERVICES PROVIDED TO MEMBERS

**Description:**

The programs, services and supports provided through the PEIGA are not well known by many of the Association members and other stakeholders within the golf sector. There is ambiguity as to who is a member of the Association, and what the benefits of being a member are. Golf course owners and operators are unclear about their role within the Association; are there different expectations and/or working relationships (in terms of the PEIGA) when dealing with public and private courses? Some course owners collect and pass on PEIGA memberships fees, some others do not. What is the value-added benefit to courses of having perceived higher membership rates because of this sometimes 'hidden fee'. How can there be more recognition of the contribution of golf courses to the association?

**Short Term Goals:**

- A. To identify/document the benefits of being a PEIGA members
- B. To identify/document the range of services and programs (e.g. ratings for courses, handicap protocols, etc) that are beneficial to course owners, and regularly communicate and discuss these with course owners.

**Action Steps:**

- Create a descriptive 'user-friendly' brochure that could be circulated to members and potential members outlining the benefits of being a PEIGA member (i.e. rules of etiquette booklet, PEIGA/RCGA card entitles players to discounted green fees, a golf magazine, etc)..
- Work through course owners/operators to distribute this information to members and potential members (many owners/operators send out a membership renewal invitation early on in the year - a PEIGA brochure could be sent out through this type of mailing).

**Long Term Goal:**

- A. To establish a consistent protocol with course operators regarding the issue of PEIGA membership fees.

**Action Step:**

- Explore the issue of the PEIGA membership fee and work out an acceptable approach to have all courses include this fee into their membership fee structure (i.e. examine the benefits to the course owner).

<b>Critical Issue/Priority</b>
COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

**Description:**

The public perception is that golf is an expensive sport, that takes a long time to play, and is complicated to learn. A comprehensive communications and public relations strategy needs to be developed to change this public perception and to entice a broader demographic to join the sport.

**Short Term Goals and Action Steps:**

- A. Conduct a needs assessment with industry stakeholders to define a collaborative communications strategy with measurable outcomes and impact.
- B. Design and implement a multi-faceted communications strategy to enhance the dialogue within the golfing community and to attract a broader demographic to the sport.
- C. Enhance the PEIGA website and use as *the* source for all amateur golf related information (upload videos, RCGA regulations/updates etc).

<b>Critical Issue/Priority</b>
IMPLEMENT GOLF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

**Description:**

A number of development programs have emerged at various golf courses across PEI. In particular, the programs focus primarily on developing children, youth, and women’s golf skills. These programs tend to stand- alone and are not part of a cohesive provincial program where a participant could progress from one level to another as they get older, or as their skills develop. In order for golf to grow, a consistent provincially designated program should be designed so the standards are recognized and transferable if/when a player becomes a member in another geographic area or golf course.

**Short Term Goals:**

- A. To develop and implement a provincial golf development program for children/youth (both boys and girls) and work with course owners and operators to introduce it at all golf courses across the province.
- B. To conduct focus groups with representation from women, families, retirees etc. to identify determinants that either may hinder or influence their decision to participate in golf.

**Action Steps:**

- Explore best practices regarding children/youth development; what is happening on PEI (and in other provinces and jurisdictions) that could become part of a province wide program?
- Establish a Junior Golf Coordinator position to oversee and direct the children/youth golf development program.
- Explore with the Holland College the possibility of developing in-school programming and training for Phys. Ed. teachers (1-2 day workshops) to incorporate golf into their school recreation/sport curriculum.

**Long Term Goal:**

Develop a framework and process to standardize all PEIGA programs across PEI

<b>Critical Issue/Priority</b>
DEVELOP ALTERNATIVE REVENUE SOURCES FOR THE PEIGA

**Description :**

The PEIGA has limited resources to develop, implement and monitor its programs and services. In recent years, there have been declining numbers of the 'traditional' golfer; in some areas Club memberships are declining, and there are fewer numbers registering for competitive events. These trends are impacting the current and potential revenue base for the PEIGA, and if the Association is to grow and strengthen as a viable organization, new revenue sources must be explored.

**Short Term Goals:**

- A. Develop the Public Player Program
- B. Explore other government/public funding streams
- C. Address the ambiguity and inconsistency regarding PEIGA membership fees

**Action Steps:**

- Develop new benefits/incentives for the Public Player (short tournaments, network, newsletter, etc), discuss with courses the benefits for them of PEIGA membership, develop 'user-friendly' package for golf course operators to distribute to players.

- Develop a creative strategy to approach various government departments around funding specific programs or initiatives (i.e. tailor requests for unique programming to different departmental priorities - e.g. health and wellness, recreation, etc)
- Clarify the PEIGA expectations around course members and PEIGA fees and implement a consistent dues payment process

**Long Term Goal:**

Develop a long term, multi-faceted, revenue generation strategy fundraising strategy (e.g. increased membership, government funding streams, targeted corporate sponsorships, creative fund-raising initiatives)

Critical Issue/Priority
DEVELOP VOLUNTEER CAPACITY

**Description:**

The PEIGA is highly dependent on the help of volunteers and has, over the years, had access to committed golf volunteers. The landscape for volunteering is changing and the some people believe that the Association could be doing more to attract and retain new volunteers into the sport to assist the Association.

**Short Term Goals:**

- To identify the roles, events and/or activities that volunteers are most needed for.
- To complete an inventory of the existing volunteer base (who, what expertise and skills, how long a volunteer, etc).
- Develop a risk management plan and policies for volunteer engagement.

**Long Term Goal:**

To develop a volunteer recruitment and retention strategy

**Action Steps:**

- Identify volunteers needs - match\_volunteer skills and experience to specific roles/jobs.
- Provide training/orientation for new volunteers and support where appropriate; provide recognition, small perks and rewards
- Identify potential sources of future volunteers (FutureLinks, baby boomers)
- Develop the incentive/motivation for members to give something back

## **Summary and Conclusion**

The consultation with golf industry stakeholders held on January 9, 2009 serves as the preliminary activity to developing a purposeful strategic planning document for the Prince Edward Island Golf Association. Key priority areas outlined by the session participants include; a review of the organizational structure and business practices of the PEIGA; identifying and communicating the value-added services provided to members; developing a internal/external communication strategy; explore the development of provincially recognized golf development programs; develop alternative revenue sources for the Association; and build volunteer capacity to support various initiatives.

With review and input on the contents of this document, the PEI Golf Association Board and Management will move forward with the development of a multi-year work plan. Financial resources, human resources, and overall support from the golf community are just a few of the key determinants to the growth of the PEI Golf Association and amateur golf on Prince Edward Island.